

【論 説】

The significance of Japan-U.S. alliance and the new role of Japan

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Introduction

Mike Mansfield who was a former U.S. Ambassador to Japan from 1977 to 1989 said that “the most important bilateral relationship in the world today is that between the United States and Japan.”⁽¹⁾ In those days, 40 percent of world GDP was made up by the two countries. But both countries support the cornerstone of international system in the security and stability of Asia Pacific region today.

In this time, on 19 September 2015, the House of Councillors finally enacted the new security-related laws that will mark a historic change to post-war security policy, proactive contribution to peace. The key points of the law include limited collective self-defense, international peace support, logistic support, peace keeping, and asset protection.⁽²⁾

The main reason to establish the law is the severe security environment like the rising China and provocative North Korea. In particular, China is transitioning to be a powerful influence to the Asia Pacific region from a land to a maritime power with assertive claims.⁽³⁾

A maritime nation Japan owes the Asia Pacific region for its survival

and prosperity as well as the United States. The Japan-U.S. alliance has maintained the peace and stability in the region prior to today. But there is no doubt that the security environment is getting more severe to ensure both peace and stability in the future.

The United States continues to engage the region by rebalancing to protect free and access to maritime Asia.⁽⁴⁾ It is required to make efforts to update the alliance for Japan and the United States to fit for the dynamic changing security environment through different critical security viewpoints.

This thesis is a purpose to advocate the importance of Japan-U. S. alliance and the new role of Japan. The framework of this thesis is to make up by hearing professors and researchers of U. S. Naval War College⁽⁵⁾ during visit on October 2014.

1 The security threats in the Asia Pacific region

The most security concern of the Asia Pacific region is growing power of China and how the power being used. Its forced execution undermines the international and regional peace and stability. In particular, there are two natures in the Chinese growing maritime power. First, it is a positive contribution. China can make maritime stability especially in far seas. Second, it is a disruptive stability of the region. The most concern is that China desires to do destructive demonstrations to the United States and neighboring countries by asserting control over near seas.⁽⁶⁾

China tries to make the Asia Pacific region instable to vie with Vietnam, Malaysia, and Philippines in the South China Sea as well as Japan in the East China Sea. China asserts strongly and tries to change the stable status quo intentionally. Therefore, there are some positional possibilities of occurring unstable conflict unexpectedly in these two fronts. In addition, due to the modernization of weapons, it is necessary to pay attention to

raise escalation rudder suddenly as one of the features of modern war.

The relationship between China and Russia is still important. Russia can be seen as the second player and stand on either side of the United States and China in the Asia Pacific region. Especially as for naval relationship, Russia promotes the wider exchange on either side include Japan, China, and India. However, Russia feels a potential threat to China geopolitically.

Second, it is some problems such as nuclear development, ballistic missile, domestic politics, and economy in North Korea. These are not easy to resolve. Furthermore, the collapse of current regime has a risk to increase more confusion.⁽⁷⁾ North Korea is fraught with many internal problems and lacking of global perspective. In addition, it is likely to take a provocative action and also has modern weapons, so has a potential risk to make the situation worse.

Third, transnational issues include man-made and natural disasters. Man-made disasters have terrorism, piracy, armed robbery, smuggling, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, cyber and small arms sales. Recently, terrorism is spreading to the Asia Pacific region by the influence of the Islamic State. Cyber issues are also getting more influential to the peacetime security. Natural disasters have earthquake, tsunami, and refugee cross-border. One of the particular characteristics of the region is disaster-prone. Both two are really big problems. The other transnational issues are climate change and economic development. This is a global issue that we must consider throughout the region. Especially with regard to environmental pollution and fishing rights problems, it should encourage the appropriate management in a cooperative manner and contribute to the prevention of international conflicts.

There are traditional security threats and non-traditional security threats mixed and different historical and cultural background in the Asia Pacific region. They make maintenance of the regional order more difficult. There

are remarkable and the most influential characters which are the concerns about the assertive claims and actions of rising China and the complexity of various actors present in the region.

First, with regard to China, it is undoubtedly the largest concern. The assertive claims and actions of rising China are the biggest obstacle for maintaining the peace and stability in the Asia Pacific region. Second, as for various actors, there is a wide variety of actors such as China, Russia, North Korea, and India which have difficult problem to solve. Therefore, it will be allowed to further complicate the problems in the regional security.

There is rather a risk that accidental escalation leads to major conflicts. It is necessary to continue to manage with a longtime viewpoint in cooperation with rising China. Japan and the United States need to strengthen the relationship among the Asia Pacific countries to create cooperative environment. The key to aim a peaceful solution is to have the common recognition of the fact that the conflict is not the national interest for both sides.

2 The significance of Japan-U.S. alliance

The Japan-U.S. alliance has contributed to maintain the peace and stability in the Asia Pacific region. However it is uncertain the alliance will work effectively in the future. The Japan-U.S. alliance is required to update to cope with the changing severe security concerns in the region.

The significance of the Japan-U.S. alliance is to deepen the cooperative relationship, to develop multilateral framework, and facilitate international agreements.⁽⁸⁾ It is the most important key factor to include China in multilateral framework. It is necessary not to contain China but to take long times to improve the security environment which the tension is not generated through working together the strong allies. In particular, the historical issue is a conceivable barrier for Japan. However, the political

and diplomatic issues and historical issues are to be discussed separately. Additionally, it is not easy to solve the complicated security problems in the Asia Pacific region, but Japan and the United States should make various alternatives to manage numerous security issues appropriately.

It will be considered to combine the following two approaches; direct and indirect, and political and military approach.

First, with regard to direct way in direct and indirect approaches, it is a strengthening of the alliance to counter great power rivalry. Particularly, military-military cooperation is important such as the dialogue at all levels to clearly understand each other. Especially for Japan and the United States, it is also important to share threats recognition and obtain the agreement how to respond various threats. The most important thing is to recognize China and not to misunderstand that the Japan-U.S. alliance is so strong and no gap.

Next, as for an indirect way, it will be also regarded as a long-term and even ambiguous. In order to respond to great power rivalry and transnational issues in the Asia Pacific region, it is important to have a cooperative relationship, deepen mutual understanding through the relationship, and to minimize the accidental war. Although it is very tough question of what kind of cooperation mechanism works well, ASEAN, NATO, Indian Ocean Naval Symposium, Combined Task Force 151 might be one of the cooperation models.

Second, from the point of political and military purposes, the Japan-U.S. alliance copes with the both. Politically, it provides the foundation of broader relationship. In particular, it is to take a counter balance to China growing marine power. Militarily, it is a necessary technological power to ensure Japan and the United States access to the East China Sea and the South China Sea. The Japan-U.S. alliance with such a purpose is an essential global security system so as to achieve the regional security and

stability.

Lastly, the most realistic and best option to do now for Japan and the United States is to show off the strong the Japan-U.S. relationship that has been built so far. The largest partner in the Asia Pacific region is Japan for the United States and there is a need to find better partners such as Taiwan, Philippines, and Vietnam. Japan is also outstanding and sophisticated in military and economics. It is necessary to aim at normalization for the Japan- U.S. relationship and the Japan Maritime Self –Defense Force (JMSDF) and U.S. Navy relationship.

More concretely on the scene, it is important to always work together, communicate each other, and do exercises for JMSDF Maritime Staff Office, Self-Defense fleet, U.S. 7th Fleet, and U.S. Pacific Fleet. It is strategically and operationally significant to do Japan and the U.S. joint exercise continuously based on common security background. Proficiency interaction is needed from now. One of them would be trading the Liaison Officers. The stages of the relationship are (1) de-conflict, (2) cooperation, (3) synchronization, and (4) integration. Japan and the United States should make best integrated force with each of the strong points.

It is clear that strengthening the Japan-U.S. alliance is required now and in the near future. The military role in the alliance is also getting more important. With respect to further strengthen the Japan-U.S. alliance, there is the possibility and effectiveness of further strengthening it while evaluating the strong relationships has been built so far. Further strengthening the Japan-U.S. alliance results in a synergistic effect on the relationship among the partner countries have the potential to produce a lot of options to resolve the complexed security problems in Asia Pacific region. As for the importance of the military role, the peacetime role is of great expectations in the traditional security threats and non-traditional security threats mixed Asia Pacific region.

3 New roles of Japan

Finally, Japan should make efforts to explore its security roles in the Asia Pacific region and international society in cooperation with the United States.

International security role for Japan is really increasing such as PKO, anti-piracy operations, and the recent Cabinet decisions concerning the right of collective self-defense. Japan should continue to work actively in international roles, not only in Asia Pacific region.

Japan is economic, diplomatic, and military major player in the Asia Pacific region. It should promote a military contribution commensurate with its economic strength. In other words, Japan should expand more international security activities, because it has put the foundation of its prosperity in the global trade and free navigation. Japan is an unquestionable major regional power. It is expected to become even global power.

Particularly, Japanese naval power is first-rate, especially JMSDF. Although Japan was introverted under the legal constraints such as the Constitution so far, it should play a defensive role for the sake of peace of the international community and retain the necessary capabilities. In addition, with regard to the defense of its territory, Japan should claim clearly and take actions in order to maintain the peaceful status quo. It must be the deterrence. We must prepare for the war at peace time. It will be the real deterrence. Otherwise, it will be too late.

As the United States cannot lead the entire among various cooperative mechanisms, it is so significant that Japan can take leading roles to deepen some of them. It will be ideal form of cooperative relationship in the Asia Pacific region that the other countries learn Japanese proactive and coordinated action. As Japan has such capabilities, it should show to lead the cooperative relationships and prevent accidental escalation.

One of the important big steps for Japan is to lead the whole-of-

government approach including the Japan Coast Guard and Customs. Japan leading other Asian countries and the United States supporting Japan will be ideal model of the “supporting-supported” Japan-U.S. alliance.

It will be needed to take time for adjustment to get the international agreement in some security fields. Japan must play an international role commensurate with national power. One of proposed options Japan should do now is that Japan is being sought to be actively claiming to act in the area of security which can be led. In particular, Japan should lead Non-Combat Military Operation: NCMO.”⁽⁹⁾

More specifically, there will be considered three fields; maintenance of international order, international logistics support, and international humanitarian assistance. Proactive Japanese participation in NCMO activities such as humanitarian assistance/disaster relief, anti-piracy operation, and search and rescue encourages Japan to take more responsibilities in regional and global security based on “Proactive Contribution to Peace” banner.

Conclusion

Japan and the United States have an importance to take more practical approach to China. There are the strong ties between the allies and the larger expectation for Japan in the Asia Pacific region. Japan and the United States should continue to work together and deepen each intellectual for the maritime security in the Asia Pacific region through deepening the alliance.

As a first step, it is so critical important to do strategic and intellectual human relationship building at all levels between two countries. One of the enablers for deepening strategic and intellectual human networks is the relationship between the U.S. Naval War College and the JMSDF Maritime Command and Staff College. Each can exchange faculty members, staffs,

and students to improve their strength and reinforce their weaknesses. It is critical to have common intellectual background for maritime security in the Asia Pacific region.

In the complex international environment, one nation can not defend against the adversary. Friendly relations between Japan and the United States have Nation's sense of values of freedom and democracy jointly. The two nations must cooperate to maintain peace and stability in the Asia Pacific region particularly. Because, in the international relations "since the end of the Second World War, the realities of interdependence have predominated."⁽¹⁰⁾ In this meaning, "the security-related bills will be an important legal basis for the government to conduct diplomacy and military affairs as two wheels of a single cart."⁽¹¹⁾

Furthermore, Japan agree to such a demand that "Japan must enhance its deterrent power with a stronger Japan-U.S. alliance and have a strategic foreign policy in cooperation with concerned countries to maintain stability and prosperity in Asia."⁽¹²⁾

Notes

- (1) Mike Mansfield, "The U. S. and Japan: Sharing Our Destinies," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 68, no.2, Spring, 1989, p. 3.
- (2) Cabinet Secretariat, September 19, 2015, http://www.cas.go.jp/jp/gaiyou/jimu/housei_seibi.html.
- (3) Andrew Erickson, Lyle Goldstein, and Carnes Lord, "When Land Power Look Seaward," *Proceedings*, Vol. 137/4/1, 298, April 2011, pp. 18-23.
- (4) The U.S. Department of Defense, *Asia-Pacific Maritime Security Strategy*, August 21, 2015.
- (5) The U.S. Naval War College locates Newport, Rhode Island of the U.S., and it is the academic place which integral to the U.S. Navy from its infancy during the Revolutionary War to its present day highly sophistication.
- (6) Peter A. Dutton, "China's Maritime Disputes in the East and South China Seas," Testimony by Peter A. Dutton before a Hearing of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, January 14, 2014, *Naval War College Review*,

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- (7) Terrence Roehrig, “North Korean Weapons: Motivation, Strategy, and Doctrine,” in James Holmes and Toshi Yoshihara (eds.) *Nuclear Strategy in the Second Nuclear Age*, (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2012) pp. 81-98.
- (8) Andrew L. Oros and Yuki Tatsumi, *Global Security Watch JAPAN*, (California: Praeger, 2010) pp. 71- 96.
- (9) Takuya Shimodaira, “The Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force in the Age of Multilateral Cooperation: Nontraditional Security,” *Naval War College Review*, Vol. 67, No. 2, Spring 2014, pp. 52-68.
- (10) Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994) p.18.
- (11) *The Japan News*, September 20, 2015.
- (12) Ibid.

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